Species Fact Sheet Marsh Sandwort *Arenaria paludicola*



STATUS: ENDANGERED

The marsh sandwort, *Arenaria paludicola*, potentially occurs in Pierce County, Washington.

(Map may reflect historical as well as recent sightings)

The marsh sandwort, *Arenaria paludicola*, was federally listed as endangered in 1993. A five year status review was completed in 2008.

Current and Historical Status

Ten populations of *Arenaria paludicola* were historically documented along the Pacific coast from central-western Washington to southern California. At the time

of its listing in 1993, the only population known from California occurred in Black Lake Canyon. This population is now extirpated. Currently in California, one wild population occurs at Oso Flaco Lake and one introduced population occurs on the southern edge of Morro Bay. No historical collections of marsh sandwort are documented from Oregon and only one collection exists from wetlands near Tacoma, Pierce County, Washington (1896). This species is extirpated in both Washington and Oregon.

Description and Life History

Marsh sandwort is a dicotyledonous plant belonging to the pink family (Caryophyllaceae). This herbaceous green perennial is often supported by surrounding vegetation, with angled or grooved stems, which are glabrous (without hair) except at the nodes (points of leaf attachment). The trailing stems often root at the nodes, and can be up to 3 feet long. The opposite leaves of the plant are lanceolate (lance-shaped) and narrowly acute (sharp-pointed), with a solitary mid-vein. The species blooms from May to August. Flowers are small, white, and borne singly on long stalks arising from the leafaxils; capsules (fruits) contain 15 to 20 seeds. The solitary axillary flower and smooth, angled stem distinguish this species from others in the genus.

Habitat

Arenaria paludicola is a coastal species that was historically known to occur in wetlands and in freshwater marshes. Plants have been documented in areas with or without standing water and in acidic, organic bog soils and sandy substrates with high organic content.

Reasons for Decline

Habitat degradation or destruction and competition with exotic species for light, water, nutrients, and space have contributed to the decline of this plant. Changes in hydrology from drought, development, and drilling likely have contributed to declines.

Conservation Efforts

Due to the loss of so many historical populations of *Arenaria paludicola* and the decline of the one remaining population, the Service has supported, and continues to support, efforts to reintroduce this species to historically occupied locations that have suitable habitat and to introduce it to additional sites with suitable habitat within its historical range.

To date, there have been three attempts to introduce this species back into

suitable habitat within its historical range in California, two of which have failed. The surviving introduced population, at Sweet Springs Marsh, is on protected (conserved) lands and appears to be stable. While none of the recovery criteria have been met, the USFWS is working to introduce this plant to several sites on protected lands within its historical range.

References and Links

<u>Listing Status 1993</u>
<u>USFWS Threatened and Endangered Species Profile</u>
<u>WA DNR</u>
<u>Recovery Plan 1998</u>
5 Year Review 2008